



#### Your Doctor Can ...

- Help you understand how diabetes and foot problems are related.
- Help you to use your blood glucose results to achieve your diabetes goals.
- Check your feet using a special instrument called a monofilament to test feeling in your toes and feet.
- Prescribe special shoes if you have problems like bunions, hammer toes, corns, or calluses.
- Refer you to a diabetes nurse, dietitian or pharmacist to help you learn more about managing your diabetes.
- Ask you if you have problems with your feet.
- Help you quit using tobacco and find a freedom from tobacco program.
- Refer you to a podiatrist (a doctor that specializes in foot problems) if needed.

Exercising, eating well, achieving normal blood glucose and blood pressure can help to reduce your risk of foot problems.



South Dakota Department of Health  
Diabetes Prevention and Control Program  
615 E. Fourth Street, Pierre, SD 57501-1700  
**1-800-738-2301**  
<http://diabetes.sd.gov>

2,500 copies of this document were printed at a cost of \$.13 per copy.

Supported by a cooperative agreement with the  
Centers of Disease Prevention and Control

Rev. 8/07

# Diabetes & Your Feet



Content adapted from  
recommendations of the  
SD Diabetes Advisory Council and the  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

# Diabetes And Your Feet...

Taking good care of your feet is very important when you have diabetes. People with diabetes can develop nerve damage, blood flow problems, and infections that can lead to serious foot problems that result in amputation.

## Diabetes And Foot Problems...

**Neuropathy** (nerve damage) can cause you to lose feeling in your feet. When this happens, you may have a foot injury and not even know it.

**Blood flow problems** can make injuries heal slowly and cause infections to become worse.

**High blood glucose levels** can cause nerve damage and blood flow problems in legs and feet.

**Check with your private insurance** company, Medicare, or Medicaid to see if your plan includes a diabetes foot exam or routine foot care.

What you can do to help prevent foot problems...

## The "Do's"

**Do inspect your feet every day.** Use a mirror or ask a family member to make sure that you do not miss any spots. Check for cuts, sores, scratches, hot spots, color changes, swelling, cracks, blisters, calluses, reddened areas, corns, and ingrown toenails. Call your doctor immediately if you find any of these.

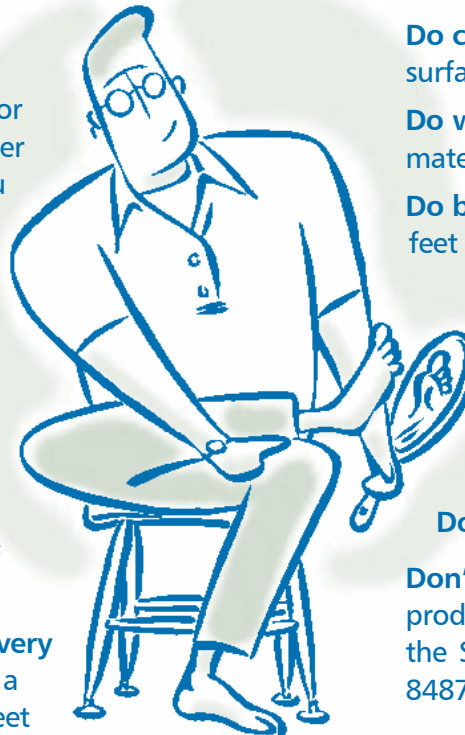
**Do wash your feet every day,** using water and a mild soap. Dry your feet well with a soft towel, making sure to dry between toes.

**Do cut your toenails straight across** and round the corners with a cardboard emery board.

**Do wear clean socks every day.** White cotton or wool socks are the best.

**Do ALWAYS wear shoes or slippers** to protect your feet, even when inside.

**Do use lotion** to keep your feet soft but avoid using lotion between your toes.



**Do ask your doctor to check your feet** at each visit. Take off your shoes and socks in the exam room as a reminder.

**Do check inside your shoes** for rough surfaces, nails or other objects.

**Do wear shoes** made of leather or other materials that allow feet to "breathe".

**Do buy shoes late in the day** when your feet are a bit larger, so shoes will fit well. Allow 1/2" toe room at the tip of the shoes.

## The "Don'ts"

**Don't use hot bath water, hot water bottles, or heating pads.**

**Don't cross your legs** at the knees.

**Don't smoke** or use other tobacco products. If you do, QUIT! Do call toll-free the South Dakota Quitline (1-866-737-8487) for counseling support as you quit.

**Don't poke your feet** or "pop" blisters.

**Don't go barefoot,** even inside.

**Don't cut your toenails shorter** than the end of the toes or cut into the corners.

**Don't use metal files.**

**Don't self-medicate** to treat calluses, corns, or warts. Seek medical care for these conditions.

**Don't wear shoes** without socks or thong sandals.

**Don't let your feet** get sunburned.